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GAULANTUS,

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

NATHANIEL H. BANNISTER,

AUTHOR OF

'CAIUS SILIUS,' 'MARRIAGE CONTRACT,' ETC. ETC.

CINCINNATI.

1836.



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CINCINNATI:

PUBLISHED BY FLASH, RYDER AND CO.

D. Murphy, Printer.

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PS 1064
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TO CHARLES BOOTH PARSONS, ESQ.

This tragedy is respectfully dedicated, by

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

No one will doubt the right which every one has to discuss the excellence and defects of all public men; to compare their talents with each other, and fairly to express opinions on their respective merits. The author, the advocate, the statesman, the preacher, and the judge, are subjects of constant and minute criticism. How Mr. A or B argued, how Mr. C or D played, how Mr. E or F preached, are the common conversation; and though there may be much bad criticism and many erroneous opinions given, yet on the whole, the disposition of the public to discuss such subjects has many beneficial advantages. It certainly enlightens the public and stimulates professional men. If persons in the graver walks of life are spoken of with such freedom, those whose profession it is to amuse, delight and inform us, must expect that the public will discuss their merits and defects with greater freedom.

‘Gaulantus,’ written by Mr. Bannister, favorably known in the south both as an author and as an actor, was lately produced for

the first time in Cincinnati. Gaulantus, the hero of this tragedy, was represented by Mr. C. B. Parsons, and in a manner that must have been gratifying to the young author: the grace, dignity and happy variety of his action, appeared well suited to the character of Gaulantus. Baranicus, the brother, found a good representation in Mr. Bannister,—likewise Leonida by Mrs. Bannister. In short all the company exerted themselves and played with spirit and animation. The subject is a good one; it is one regular and uniform story, not charged with a great variety of incidents, and yet affording several revolutions of fortune, by which the powers may be exerted, varied and driven to their full tumult of emotion: for instance, where Gaulantus describes to his brother finding his child burnt.

The deep expression of despair which Mr. Parsons executed, his sudden burst of joy when he exclaims,

‘Still am I free,
No master but the Gods!’

was masterly to a high degree, and called from the audience a simultaneous burst of approbation.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GAULS.

Gaulantus,	-	-	-	C. B. PARSONS.
Baranicus,	-	-	-	BANNISTER.
Alibdus,	-	-	-	SMITH.
Remancus,	-	-	-	VANCAMP.

ROMANS.

Carmitus,	-	-	-	JOHNSON.
Manilus,	-	-	-	HUNT.
Cestus,	-	-	-	NEWTON.
Regantus,	-	-	-	JEWELL.
Arbinus,	-	-	-	ROGERS.
Laticus,	-	-	-	FONTAINE.
Soldiers, Guards, &c.				

Leonida,	-	-	MRS. BANNISTER.
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SCENE.—*The Frontiers of Italy.*

GAULANTUS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Roman Camp. Tents on each side, and one in centre.*

Enter from centre, CARMITUS and CESTUS.

Car. Hail, glorious light!
That from the wood-clad hill and dale,
Chases night's breeding vapor.
Once more victorious we pitch our tents:
The barbarous Gauls have fled for refuge
To the mountain's caves, nor
Dare approach our camp.

Ces. The havoc was indeed most great;
Fiercely they fought, and madly rushed
Upon our soldiers' spears. But,
At their leader's fall, despair was marked
On every face, and many
On their own swords died.

Car. They are a hardy warlike race,
But discipline have none.
At the first onset, their routed ranks
Were scattered o'er the plain; while
Rome advanced in one united tide,
Slow and o'erwhelming. And,

Like the mighty ocean's swell,
Encompassed all it met.

(*Enter MANILUS.*)

Man. Good morrow, worthy friends,
The sun's red beams do cheerly on us shine,
And heralds forth the victory of Rome.

Car. True; that rude disturber, fear,
Has fled our soldiers' hearts,
And sleep alone doth o'er them reign.

Man. Goest thou for Rome to-day, Carmitus?

Car. No. My messenger's return from thence,
I purpose here to wait.

Man. Doth he despatches of our triumph bear?

Car. He does. Cestus, see that the captives
ta'en

Are quick made fast in chains;
And give directions to an hundred men
To march them into Rome.

Ces. It shall be done.

Car. And bring with thee the female slave
But now lodged in my tent.

(*Exit CESTUS.*)

Man. Why not the captives station here
Till we ourselves do march?

Car. They will but prove a burden, and
impede our way;
Lead to the grove the heavy-armed troops,
And bid them doff their armor.

This day to rest and sport
Let all devote; but first let those proud Gauls
Who braved me with their scorn,
Be put to instant death!

Man. To death!

Car. Aye, to death.

Man. Nay, they are our captives. Their death
Will bring a stain upon our noble name.

For Rome, so proudly famed throughout the
world

For love of freedom, should not mercy lack.

Car. I care not. Upon their deaths
I have resolved, and that thou
Seest it done.

Man. If you are fixed, I must obey.

(*Exit MANILUS.*)

Car. Ha, ha, ha, dame Nature by mistake,
Or in some merry mood, this whiner
Formed a man, when she designed
A woman. I hate these mercy-talking
Babblers,

(*Re-enter CESTUS with LEONIDA.*)

Ha, by the Gods! a captive of some value.
Cestus, withdraw. Fair maid,
Why droop'st thy head?

(*Exit CESTUS.*)

Leon. I am in bondage.

Car. Is that the only cause?

Leon. No.

(*Sighing.*)

Car. What dost thou sigh for?

Leon. Death!

Car. Thou art young in years.

Leon. But old in wretchedness.

Swift as the hurricane, the mountain of its trees
divests,

Wild war's rude blast has from me

Kinsmen torn. The world

To me is now a gloomy blank, and

Sorrow in my heart triumphant reigns.

Car. Weep not, for I

To thee will prove a friend.

Leon. Thou wilt? Then stop the crimson
stream

That nurtures this sad heart.

My being end at once, and free me

From the world's cold, dark oppressions.

Strike, Roman! fear I not. A

Warrior's wife a warrior's heart doth bear.

Car. Thou art heroic. Hast thou nought to
fear?

Hath death no terrors?—Wouldst not longer live?

The world is bright and beautiful,

Thou wouldst not die so soon?

Leon. I would. The joys of life have from me
ever fled,

Sad heritor am I of keenest misery.

Car. Thou art a wife——

Leon. I was; but am a widow now.

I was a mother, too, but now

My boy is dead.

Car. Art sure thy husband fell?

Leon. He would not live a slave!

He was a Gaul! Art now convinced

He could not live in chains?

Car. If he in battle fell, then died he nobly;

For 'twas by Roman hands. Yet thou

Shouldst not despair. A happy

Home for thee is here, as that thou

Late hast left. Guards, ho!

(Enter Guards.)

Bear this woman to the tent next mine.

Leon. What dost thou purpose?

Car. 'Thou'lt know anon.

Leon. What matters it to me? Lead where
you will,

My soul without a pang or sigh, can

Dire affliction meet. Shade of my buried lord,

Watch o'er thy wretched wife. And

If thou sit'st among the Gods, send

Some winged angel down to waft me

To thine arms—there to enjoy sweet peace,

Which fate denies me here.

(Exit with guards.)

Car. A very goddess! I am in love already.

She goes not hence, but ' shall
With me remain. Her woes have
Full possession of her heart, but time
Will heal the wounds. The rapid tide
Of her unbounded grief, will
Eke its courses out.

(*Trumpet.*)

Hark! the trumpet sounds
The knell of Gællic death; I'll forth
And see the miscreants die.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Roman Camp.*
Enter ARBINIUS and MANILUS.

Man. If what thou say'st be true,
Our fighting is not done. Of
Nature stubborn, and to warfare used,
These Gauls will press us hard.

Arbin. At early dawn they ranged behind the
hill,
Nor ventured to the plain. Some
Stragglers ta'en, declared that they
Had been our camp o'erlooking.

Man. I thought scarce one survived
The battle's desperate shock. A
Dozen fields wide deluged with their blood,
Yet they an army boast!

Arbin. Aye, of much number, too; yet

They are wide dispersed, and so
By famine worn, that we
Have nought to fear.

Man. 'Tis well; for when in power
Their brutal fury sex nor age doth spare.
Thou goest to-day for Rome—I'd have
Thee call upon my wife, and say—
But stay, I'll give thee letters.

(*Enter CESTUS.*)

Ces. Good Manilus, our general waits your
presence.

Arbinus, the captives, chained, await
Thy coming to begin their march.

Man. Let's to the spot; the surest armor
For a soldier's heart, is
Prompt alacrity. Come on!

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.—*A mountainous country. Rocks
on each side; a cave in centre. Thunder
and lightning. GAULANTUS comes from
cave; his arms, legs and shoulders bare.*

Gaul. The night is gloomy as my soul.
My bosom and the sky do well accord,
For both are fraught with tempests!
Despair! my blood is curdled by thy cold dark
hand,
But yet thou shalt not triumph!

Methought just now, as in my cave I sat,
My wife, as fresh as in her virgin spring,
Did pass, and in mine ear,
With accents sweet, soft whisper'd me to hope.
'Twas but some vision of the brain, that
Painted, while I slept, my heart's
Dear waking wish. Or else
Some fiend her shape and form assuming,
To mock my aching eyes!
All is still; a deeper gloom
Ne'er covered earth; in dark descending clouds
The tempests of night are hid, and
Not a ray of light doth break upon me——

(*Thunder.*)

Save the blue lightning's angry flash.

(*Storm.*)

Burst louder forth, dread trumpet
Of the sky! Descend to earth full charged,
To hurl destruction on these Roman dogs!

(*Retires.*)

(*Enter REGANTUS.*)

Reg. The Gods be thanked, I've reached at last
A shelter. Nor can I be
Far from the Roman camp.
A dangerous pursuit, and I alone
The savage fury of the Gauls escaped.

Gaul. (*seeing him.*) Who art thou?

Reg. A Roman!

Gaul. Ah! then thy doom is death.

Reg. What dost thou mean?

Gaul. What I have said.

Reg. Art thou a Roman?

Gaul. No! I thank the Gods!

I am a Gaul; one of that free-born race

Your coward numbers crush'd.

Their fall was noble—for

Your nation's millions kissed the goary earth,

Ere Gallia was subdued. I hate

The very name of Rome: be thou

Prepared to die. *(Draws sword.)*

Reg. I will not tamely yield.

(REGANTUS draws his sword and rushes at GAULANTUS, who, with a blow, disarms him. REGANTUS falls upon his knees.)

Mercy! mercy!

Gaul. The smallest spark dwells not within
my breast;

My heart is rock beyond thy power to melt;

Thou owest it to thy country.

Where is my wife—my father—

Brother—child? Slain by base Roman hands,

And their red blood cries out to heaven,

Revenge! *(Seizes him.)*

Reg. Horror! spare me!—

Gaul. Thou might'st as well command

The lonely tree, that stands
Defenceless on yon rocky steep,
To stop the roaring blast, and
Drive it back to heaven, as
Hope for mercy from my uplifted arm!

Reg. Save me for my wife and child.

(GAULANTUS staggers back.)

Gaul. Hast thou a wife?—Art thou
A father too?—

Reg. I am, I am: O spare me for their sakes.
The Gods will see and bless the deed.

Gaul. Fly hence—begone!
Thy wife and child desert not;
Mine, mine, O Gods! are
Lost forever!

Reg. Receive a father's thanks! thou
Noble, generous man!

Gaul. Liar! the hungry tiger driven wild,
Is savage less than I. Begone,
Or thou shalt die this instant.

(Exit REGANTUS.)

He is a father, and a husband, too,
I could not take his life, yet I
By their accursed hands,
Am 'rest of all I loved. Why
Did I spare him? But, 'tis done;
No matter, let him go. Ah, Gods!
How many noble Gauls lie

On the earth in death!—their
Bleaching bones the summer air
Offending.—While the damn'd foe
Exulting o'er their fall, in hellish
Orgies revel. Why
Not at once this wretched being end!—
What's left to live for?—The
Cheering joys of life are fled,
And sorrow brooding reigns.
My little boy, in yonder cave,
Sleeps in the arms of death. His
Prattle which so oft did please mine ear,
Will never more be heard.
His roseate cheek is yellowed by the tomb;
The groveling worm on his sweet body feeds.
Well, be it as it is. Thou fate inscrutable
Hast made it so!
My aged father, too, his country's
Fate deploring, plunged headlong down
From the Tarpean rock into the
Deep abyss of death. And thou,
My wife!—Back, memory back;
To dark oblivion, and hide
Forever there. Chide me no more,
Nor haunt me, damning fancy!
Thou maddening thought be still,
Surmise not for the future, for
That future shall be short on earth;

Here, here, at once, I'll quench the light of life.

(He draws his sword, and as he is about to strike, a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a terrific peal of thunder, strikes the rock above, which falls with a crash.)

Ha! the Gods in thunder stop my hand,
And warn me to desist.

(Looks at sword.)

By heaven thou reekest still with
Roman blood; vengeance is written on thy blade,
And the thunderer bids me forth.

I will obey the mandate—I—and live
Though it do prove my curse!

Ye towering cliffs! be your proud heights
My home! Hail, hail, my kingdom,
Where Revenge hath built her seat.

(Exit.)

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Roman Camp.*

Enter CARMITUS and REGANTUS.

Car. He showed thee mercy?—Now, by the Gods,

I thought it dwelt not in their savage hearts.

Reg. Although a Gaul, he seemed of pity made,
Force he defied, but when I
Of my wife and children spoke,
He melted like a girl. A noble Gaul;
I could not do him harm.

Car. Thou saw'st him in the mountain?

Reg. Aye,—seeking a shelter from the storm,
I was by him encountered.

Car. In what direction doth
This mountain lie?

Reg. 'Tis south, a little bearing east,

Car. Of leagues how many dost thou
Think from here?

Reg. A half a score or less, I cannot
Strictly tell.

Car. 'Twould please me well to see
This mercy-loving man! Cestus!
What, ho!—

(*Enter CESTUS.*)

Ces. Your orders I await.

Car. 'Take thou a cohort of our body guard,
And lead them to the mountains—
Some ten leagues from hence—thou'lt
Find a single Gaul. Bring him
Before me. Regantus will explain
More as ye journey on.

Reg. My general, I fain would be excused;
The task I like not; 't would be
A base return for mercy shown to me.

Car. 'Tis my command! Away!—
My bidding do; and leave the canting part
To priests, and fools like him
Who spared thy life.

(*Exit REGANTUS and CESTUS.*)
(*Enter MANILUS*)

Man. My general, the captives
Have their march commenced;
I with them journeyed several leagues
To see them fairly on.

Car. 'Tis well. Hast thou my captive maid
This morning seen?

Man. I saw her as I passed the tent;
Her eyes were red with weeping.

Car. Misery-courting fool!
Folly more weak mankind doth not possess,
Than sighing after what they cannot have;
The truly wise is with his lot content,
Nor seeks a contrast that will make it worse.

The highest dames of Carthage would be proud
To fill the place she scorns. But sorrow,
Woe, or joy, she shall be mine.

Man. She rather claims my pity
For her fate.

Car. And mine — so much so,
That this day I'll to my purpose force her.

Man. Nay, I beseech you, do not;
Thy well-acquired fame should not be sullied,—
Thy dear-bought honor bear so foul a stain.
But let her, with the rest,
Be sent to Rome, and share the fate
The senate shall decree.

Car. I will when in her charms
I've reveled. Beauty like hers
Should meet its compliment; a
Poor one that which left it unenjoyed.

Man. But what——

Car. No more; thy words displease me.
As soon could thou from yon bright heaven,
Each orb displace, as move me
From my fixed intent.
The greatest fools have minds most wavering;
Who would succeed must stand upon his purpose,
As he who gains his point,
(Be it good or bad,) receives the world's applause,
And is the first
To fortune and to fame.

Thy counsel's good for nought;
The Gauls had ne'er been vanquished
Had I hearkened unto thee.

Man. Nor our brave soldiers slain,
Who might have lived in nobler
Cause to die.

Car. Thy meaning is obscure,
I pray thee speak again.

Man. Thy rashness urged them on
Where glory waited not.

Car. Villain, dar'st speak to me
In terms like these?

Man. I speak the truth; I mean thee no offence.
The truth should never give offence.

Car. Must I this endure? —'tis well,
Old man, thy head is white with age,
Or with this sword I'd give thee
Back the lie.

Man. Your anger is my sport. The
Mighty general who has armies conquered,
Cannot command himself.

Car. Leave me, dastard.

Man. With joy I quit thy presence,
Thy fellowship is not
The worthiest to be found.
But short my speech, forsooth,
An hundred jav'lins pointed at my breast,
Could not send back the truth.

When thou art in a better mood, I'll
Come to thee again.

(*Exit.*)

Car. Officious fool! He'll some day
Strain his speech too far. But
Of him no more. I'll straightway to
My prisoner, and win her to my will.
A virtue-talking dame—of true
Patrician blood; but if she yields not,
I but little know.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE II.—*A Wood.*

Enter BARANICUS and ALIBDUS.

Bar. How many leagues, Alibdus,
Have we come?

Alib. Methinks
It were some thirty.

Bar. We have traveled fast.

Alib. Think'st thou we now
Can rest in safety?

Bar. Let the base foe come on;
Few as we are, our lives will cost them dear;
For mine own part, this sword
Shall never leave my hand while
Nerve is left to grasp it:
A soldier trained am I; a
Soldier's death my meed shall be.

Alib. When on our abject state
I do reflect; how driven, how cut off,
My very soul doth sink, and I
Am ready to despair.

Bar. All, all is lost — no kinsmen
Have I now, no country — home!
Our nation humbled down —
Deserted by the Gods — will
Never rise again. Our name and cause forgotten,
And in oblivion sunk.
Ages unborn will hear and speak
Of Rome, when on fair Gallia's soil
Another nation stands. Hist'ry
Will speak of feats by Rome achieved, —
Omitting Gaul, scarce knowing that she was;
My country! O my country!

(*Enter REMANCUS.*)

Rem. Do I behold
Baranicus?

Bar. It is, — my friend, and
Hast thou too escaped?

Rem. The Gods be praised I live!
Hundreds who fled for safety from the foe,
Are hourly flocking back.

Bar. Thou fill'st my heart with hope.

Alib. And mine. An army may we raise
To try again the field.

Rem. I have but little doubt.

Bar. I would a question ask, but
Know not how. It is — it is —
My brother! Doth he live? —

Rem. Alas, I fear he fell! Amid
The battle's storm I saw him
Fiercely rush; and with
O'erwhelming force the fight contend.

Alib. He was our pillar and our stay.

Bar. Lost, noble brother! my mother, too.
Hast thou? — but no — I need not ask.
O'er hill and precipice, through
Roaring torrents, and o'er Alpine heights,
Our women they pursued, and
On their heads defenceless, wreaked
Their horrid thirst for blood.
Cursed be the name of Roman!

Rem. O yield not to despair. We're
Strong enough to die revenged,
If not enough to conquer.

Bar. Despair, saidst thou? Let abject cowards
Yield, and tremble, and despair.
My heart is firm. Come, let us on
And join our friends once more;
We all are men, and Gauls, brave
As the Romans — as well skilled
In arms. The sun shall shine
Upon our warlike force — in
Martial pomp behold us!

Come! our watchword hence is
Vengeance!

All. Vengeance!

(Exeunt.)

SCENE III.—*Inside of CARMITUS' tent—LEONIDA discovered on a couch.*

Leon. Sure this is woe's extreme—the height
Of mortal grief. A slave, and in the
Power of one whose heart ne'er
Throbb'd with virtue's sacred glow.
O Power omnipotent—O virtue's God,
Defend my wretched state; for sure
I reign supreme the queen
Of sorrow's children.
Resplendent orb of day, descending fast.
Thy dying beam the hills with glorious
Hue doth tinge. As brilliant
As thou art, I have no wish
To see thee more. But ha,
The vile enslaver comes. A little longer
O my heart! Kind death, my
Honor's guardian soon will come!

(Enter CARMITUS.)

Car. I come to ask thy pardon, gentle dame,
And sue for gracious pity.

Leon. Ask pardon not of me. Thy
Captive I, my hate or love could
Alter not thy will.

Car. Within that breast, resentment sure

Can never find a place.

Then cheer thee, though my captive,

Yet art thou really free. My camp,

Howbeit, you can never leave,

I love thee, girl, and will

Thee high exalt. I'll take thee, too,

To Rome, and show thee splendor

Thou had'st never seen. What

Could'st thou find in Gaul?

Leon. What splendor cannot give — a
Peaceful, happy heart.

Car. And could'st thou find it not
In Rome?

Leon. No,—for there I lose the sweetest gift
The Gods bestow.

Car. What's that?

Leon. Sweet liberty! Blest with
My husband and my child, I
Knew not sorrow's weight. Those
Twins of heaven, happiness and love,
Ne'er left our humble home. With
Cheerful face we hailed each opening day,
And to the Gods poured forth our thanks,
With happy, grateful hearts. But ah,
The iron hand of war, at one fell swoop,
Has blasted all our joys. And
Black despair sits brooding o'er my heart.

Car. No more of this, my patience thou'lt
exhaust;

Thy tears cannot reanimate the dead,
Nor restore thy country to its ancient glory.
The tempest of thy stormy bosom calm,
And seize the happiness thou canst obtain.

Leon. In eternity alone.

Car. While others of thy race in
Galling chains are bound, thou
Liv'st in luxury, and in the love
Of him who thousands doth command.
If thou art wise, thou'lt yield,
Nor tempt my anger further.

Leon. Give me the chains; bind up
My limbs, till from my bones
The kindred flesh be torn. Let
The iron's ponderous weight quick
Bear me down, till on the earth
I sink to rise no more:
Do that, or more—but
Spare my honor.

Car. The crimson stream that feeds my heart
Is not more dear than thee. I
Never woman loved till I thee saw.
The conqueror of thy nation deigns
To talk to thee of love.

Leon. Thou hast unto my nation been
A scourge. Thy devastating sword
Hath robbed me of my country,
Kinsmen, friends. Ah, Gods,
Perhaps thy sword reeks with

My husband's blood. His groans,
Perhaps, were music to thine ear.
And must I hear thee speak of love?
O horror! horror! here's my naked
Breast; strike deep thy gory weapon.

Car. No, thou shalt not die so soon.
The chains of bondage will better fit
Thy form; famine thy sole companion;
Gaunt hunger gnaw thy heart. The
Only answer to thy groans and cries
The echo of thy voice.

Guards, what ho! (*Calling.*)

Leon. Condemn me not to misery like this.

Car. Thou wilt in madness thy
Shoulders tear, and, with the worms,
Feed on thy fleshless bones.

Leon. Horror on horror multiply, still
My soul, sustained by virtue,
Dares defy their power.

Car. With rage I strangle. Woman
Tremble.

Leon. At the red bolts of heaven
Tremble thou.

Car. What ho, guards!

(*Enter. LATICUS with Guards.*)

Take hence this woman, and
In chains secure her.

(*They seize her.*)

Leon. Roman! to die in virtue's cause

Is triumph. For the sweet promise
To the faithful given, makes death a
Welcome friend,—the journey to the
Land of shade—a sweet and
Blissful dream!

(Exit with Guards.)

Car. Promises and threats, alike,
Do fail to move her. Laticus—
What would thy thoughts suggest to
Mould this stubborn fair one
To my will?

Lat. Ruling her fate,
I'd force her to my purpose.

Car. I will do so, if other measures fail,
But if with her good will she'll yield,
Why 'tis the better way. Go thou
And talk with her; thy brain
With eloquence is fraught, and may
Her purpose change. If coaxing fails
The chains must needs be tried.
Succeed, and I'll reward thee well.
Anticipated joys shall buoy me up
Until thou dost return.

(Exeunt severally.)

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Wood.*

Enter BARANICUS and ALIBDUS.

Bar. Night draws her sable mantle on apace
The sun has sunk to rest; soon
Will it be the depth of darkness, and
The hour when all the world
Is hushed. By slow degrees,
Solemn and sad, wide falling o'er the earth,
The shades of night the dark wood
Cover o'er, and deepen all its horrors.
While humbled into rest, by darkness awed,
Our weary soldiers seek repose from care.
So let us wait, my friend, the
Morning's dawn, ere we again set out.

Alib. Come, let's some covert seek;
The noisome dews of night are
Falling fast, and chilling breezes
Sigh aloft—the counterpart of that
Dread night I lost my cherished wife.

Bar. No more, no more, the human race, all
—all,
Are sons of sorrow born. Let
Cowards sink beneath the load;
The brave man ne'er repines.

Alib. We cannot stop the current
Of our thoughts.

Bar. 'The cloud that o'er our fate
Like total night did hang,
Has faded into air; and balmy hope
Before us brightly shines.
Have we not from their bondage freed
An hundred noble Gauls. That
Is a triumph glorious and great, and
Will loud thanks call forth.
What desolation shall our
Vengeance spread when once again
'The embattled plain we tread.

Alib. With vengeful shouts
Our hosts will fill the air.

Bar. Aye,—and the foe strike deep
With horror; as though the Gods
Had sent us from on high,
'The bolts of Jove to aid
Our glorious cause.

Alib. Ne'er be it said my heart
With grief in fight did falter.
No; the deep remembrance of my wrongs,
The more shall it inspire.

Bar. Right. Now to our covert;
At earliest dawn like Gauls
We'll take the field, the Romans
Conquer, or like warriors die.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II. — *Part of the Roman Camp.**Enter MANILUS.*

Man. Our mighty general doth still
His wretched captive press to yield
Obedience to his brutal will. The camp,
And all things else, but her, by him's
Forgotten; and yet she treats him
With indignant scorn. He
Has released her from her bonds, and
To his tent removed her, there
With soft blandishments that would
Degrade a frantic love-sick fool, he
Speaks his hours away. I'm glad
She knows his worth. The generals
Of the present day are not the men
Of olden time; — mere boys, — much
Better fitted to make love than fight.
Had I my will, I'd scour the camp
Of such base loons, or learn them
Else their duty.

(Enter REGANTUS, CESTUS, and ARBINIUS.)

Ces. My worthy Manilus,
We must for fight prepare.

Man. What's now the matter?

Ces. The Gauls in clusters throng the hills.

Man. How's this? Arbinus here?

Arb. Aye, but a little more and I
Had not been here. Scarce had

We gone a score of leagues, when legions
Of the Gauls fell on our tired troops,
And freed their captive friends. Thy
Soldiers fled, and I alone with safety
Reach'd the camp.

Man. Hast thou, Carmitus told of this?

Arb. I have.

Man. What said he?

Ces. 'That 't was cowardice in us not
Searching in the hills. But
'T is my faith that thousands
'There lie hid; for I myself have
Countless numbers seen.

Man. No doubt; but let Carmitus have his way.
He will not be advised. Come,
Let us to our several hosts, and
See them well prepared; for 't is
Not unlike the baffled Gauls may
Greet us with surprise. I say
I like not making love in camp,
No good will come of it.
Come on.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III. — *Same as Act 1st, — Scene 3d, —
Cave, &c. Stage dark. — GAULANTUS dis-
covered seated on a rock.*

Gaul. Of all mankind sure I
Most wretched am. No pitying eye

My sorrows views, no heart bleeds for
My woes. Yet will I murmur not.
Meek patience, god-like guest, shall
In my heart abide. Empires of
Wealth could not my wife restore —
My little boy again to life bring back.
Remembrance brings to mind the day
My boy was born. My wife
With smiles told me the Gods
Had bless'd us with a son. I
Watched his stature grow, with
All a father's joy. And now —
Back, tears — back to your home — you
Suit not well my cheek. I am
Gaulantus still! — free as the lion
In his kingly lair. That triumph's
Left me still; no Roman slave
Am I — no master own!

(Enter BARANICUS and ALIBDUS, on bridge.)

Bar. This way, my friend, the moon
Will guide our steps.

(They disappear.)

Gaul. Heard I not a voice?
I pray the Gods it be a Roman.

(Goes up.)

(Enter BARANICUS and ALIBDUS.)

Bar. This mountain hold
Will serve us for the night.

Alib. I am myself quite weary.

Gaul. What foot of man my kingdom
Dare pollute? —

Bar. Ha! who art thou? —

Gaul. A Gaul! I thank the Gods! the
Direst foe of Rome!

Bar. The night is dark, I cannot see
Thy face; yet thy voice ———

Gaul. Ha! who speaks? — thy name
Is ———

Bar. Baranicus!

Gaul. Baranicus! Gods! my brother!

Bar. My brother!

(They rush into each other's arms.)

Gaul. Ha, ha, ha, my brother!

Bar. I thought, Gaulantus, brother,
Thou wert dead.

Gaul. And I, that all were gone. I stood
In mine own mind, the last, last limb
Of the wither'd, blasted tree.

Bar. Brother, thy face is haggard, and
Thine eyes are sunk within
Their orbs! While their strain'd
Cords do plainly show, the
Moisture drain'd by woe.

Gaul. My country's woes have truly
Made me weep — but while I wept,
I cursed!

Bar. Alibdus, friend,
Dost thou not share our joys?

Alib. I do, indeed!

Gaul. Alibdus! what!—Thy hand
Old warrior. Brother—

Within these arms our mother died;
To a sequestered vale, the mountains
'Mong, I bore her from the field.
I bathed her temples till returning life
Beamed coldly from her eyes.
She looked with tenderest love,
'Then ask'd for her younger born.

Bar. Would I had been there.

Gaul. I could no answer make;
Grief clogg'd my utterance, my
Tears ran fast, and tremors
Seized my frame—she—she
Died;—I wept no more, but gazed
Like one by grief made mad,
Until the battle's din aroused me
From my stupor. I paid the last
Sad tribute to her worth, then
Darted to the plain. O, Gods!
What horror met my eyes! The field
Was deluged with my people's blood—
While dying groans, and frantic women's
Shrieks, gave hellish music to
The appalling scene. I saw
My tents in flames; and I,
On every side encircled, dash'd
With the swiftness of the lightning's flash,

To where my tent did stand.
At every stroke of this good sword
A Roman measured on the ground
His length. The tent I reach'd —
I call'd my wife — no answer came,
I found my child —

Bar. Thou did'st? (*Eagerly.*)

Gaul. But how! mangled, deform'd —
His sparkling eyes from their pale sockets burst-
ing, —

His smiling face black with
The curling smoke, — his
Stark limbs fleshless — and
His hair singed from his infant head.
Within my embrace I caught
His stiffened corse, the glaring
Flames defied, and onward
Rushed, through thickening
Seas of blood. Triumphantly
I reached this spot, and then
Exclaimed — Still am I free —
No master but the Gods!

Bar. No more, my brother; yet will
We live the tyrant foe to scourge.
I myself was left upon the field
For dead. Returning life
Brought with it no new joys.
Despairing Gauls poured out
Their blood upon the field —

Exclaiming — All is lost!
Yet number came on number,
Till this day an hundred men
We rescued from the foe.

Gaul. Ye did? — But whither
May they now be found?

Bar. By this time safe in camp.

Gaul. Camp! a camp? — Are we
Indeed so strong?

Bar. Thousands are up in arms,
Ready the field to take.

Gaul. We are a nation still —
'The Gods be praised!

Bar. We are, and yet will be
In full revenged.

Alib. They live but in the hope
Of vengeance.

Gaul. And they shall have it!
By all the powers of earth, and
Air and sea, we will be full
Revenged. To Rome I swear
Deep, everlasting hate!

Bar. So do we all.

Gaul. We 've nought to hope for but
Revenge! We'll feed on that
Until our hungry hearts be
More than full. Farewell,
My kingdom, for a time, I'll
Visit you again; for in your

Rocky heart my boy doth buried lie.
Come, let us to the camp, my heart
To bursting swells. Hear me,
Ye Gods! may your eternal home
Be ever shut to me, if ever I
A Roman give his life. Mercy
Hath not a seat within my heart:
If I but thought a single spark remained,
I'd instant cast it out. Come, let our
Swords gleam high in air, — on — on,
Our cry, Revenge!

All. Revenge! revenge!

(Exeunt.)

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A mountainous country—Camp of the Gauls, fire in the centre. The stage completely filled with soldiers—women, children, &c. REMANCUS and ALIBDUS discovered. GAULANTUS and BARANICUS enter from back in full armor. A flourish and distant shouts as they come on.*

All. Hail to Gaulantus—

Noblest of the Gauls!

Gaul. Soldiers! countrymen! Long
To the horrors of the field
Have you been all inured,—long
Strangers have you been
To peace and happy homes.
Above our heads the rod of
Bondage hangs. We're of a race
That scorn to live when liberty
Is lost; for death appears
Not in a dreary light when
Chains are all our hopes.

All. Victory or death!

Gaul. Is there one here who would
Not bleed with transport
For his country?

All. No, no; not one. (*Shouts.*)

Gaul. Of this be sure, if we are conquered,
Death will be our fate; or barring that,

Eternal bondage, which is worse.
Let it not be the last—the
Blazing camp—the gaping earth—
The overwhelming flood—
Are nobler far, and easier to endure,
Than Roman slavery.

Bar. The hour of retribution's drawing nigh;
Before ye all I swear never to
Know repose, until these eyes
Are closed beneath the laurel
Shade of death's dark covert.

Alib. Though host on host oppose,
We still shall die revenged.

Bar. Could we surprise them in
Their sleep, terror would so
Their waking faces clad, that,
Like a whirlwind's thundering gust,
We should o'erturn them all.

Gaul. Behold the charioteer of day,
Proudly appearing above yonder hill.
The crisis of our nation's fate now
Hurries on apace. Ye
Whose hearts throb but for your rights,
Be firm; repress vain boasts; rather
Expect defeat than to be over sure.
Not thence to fear, but to attune
Your spirits for the time, if
Fate should bid it come.
And this of all remember,—we

No conqueror know but death.
Now sound the battle cry, and
Let us on, to hurl defiance
In the tyrant's face.

(*Flourish—Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.—*A Landscape.*

Enter GAULANTUS, BARANICUS and ALIBDUS.

Gaul. Go thou, Alibdus, and the army
Quick arrange; arouse their sleeping mettle,
And the march begin. The Roman camp
We soon again will reach.

Alib. I will.

(*Exit.*)

Bar. Brother, from childhood, we
Have little known of peace.

Gaul. True; the broils of years
Have to a soldier's life inured us.
Although prepared, I fear
The coming battle will us overthrow.
Their force in number more than ours
Treble; but at their power we'll laugh,
And die at last reveng'd.
The sun of joy to us is overcast,
His shining face in clouds of sorrow's hid;
Yet our bold deeds shall
Far o'erleap the bounds of praise.

Bar. Alas! we trembling stand
Upon the brink of fate, the crisis

Of our joys is drawing nigh, and
Time will soon decide.

Gaul. Yon mount, which stands between the
Foe and us, will serve us in the fight:
Go, brother, take the strongest force,
And with Remancus gaily hurry on,
On the left brow of the hill; I,
With Alibdus, will take the right; so
Now, to bid farewell.

Bar. Farewell; O be it not forever.

Gaul. Amen! If it be not the Gods' high will.

(*Enter REMANCUS.*)

Rem. The army full prepared
Await your orders for the march.

Bar. We are prepared.

Gaul. Let every soldier in the ranks
Bethink himself a hero; swell
Each big thought, and strengthen
Every nerve.

Bar. They look as brave men should.
'Throughout the camp, in groups
The soldiers sit; and as of war
They speak, and noble deeds,
Done by some valorous Gaul in
Days of yore, they burnish up
Their armor, and wave
Their trusty swords.

Gaul. 'T is well. Who whet their swords
For battle, whet their souls:

(*Trumpets without.*)

Hark! the battle-harbinger's shrill blast,
Calls to their post Mars' great and
Daring sons. Brother, farewell!
Remaneus, thou attend him.
My heart throbs for the action — once again,
Farewell!

Bar. Brother!

(*They embrace. Flourish.*)

Gaul. Farewell!

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III. — CARMITUS' Tent.

CARMITUS and LEONIDA discovered.

Car. Thou art the day-star of my hopes,
My thoughts, desires. This breast is
But the instrument, whose sounds,
As best befits thy will, are
High or low. Thy breast is
Filled ———

Leon. With misery and despair. No
Light on earth can ever chase
It hence. Restore me to
My chains, and that lone solitude,
Thou late hast ta'en me from; for there
My soul at least was free! and
There I held sweet converse
With the Gods.

Car. If I a moment did thy charms forget,

Thy gracious pardon I most humbly ask.
Here, at thy feet, most lowly bending,
Repenting rashness cries forgive.
I thus degrade me in mine own esteem,
To hold a place in thine.
What can more clearly prove,
The full dominion thou hast o'er my soul?
Thy image fair is graven on my heart,
And on thy lips my very doom doth hang.

Leon. This is a ten-fold bondage.

(Half aside.)

I am thy slave; forbear thy words;
E'en were my heart from misery free, I
Could not love the man whose arm
Hath plung'd by country into woe.
'Thou might'st as well attempt to
Make this flesh, thy chains have
Bruised, impassive. Waste not, then,
Thoughts on what thou never canst
Obtain. Unsullied have I lived —
Unsullied will I die.

Car. Beware how you a blazing fire fan:
I can by violence effect my purpose,
And after give thee death, since it
Thou covet'st. In power I am omnipotent,
The proud commander of a conquering army.

Leon. And yet art not a man. The
Virtue's wanting that sustains the name.
None but a dastard of degenerate birth,

Would triumph o'er a wretched hapless woman.

Car. Wilt thou mock me then?

Leon. No; but do implore thee to
Forbear a theme that makes me wretched,
And doth thee degrade.

Car. By all the powers of heaven and earth
combined,
I swear, thou shalt be mine!

(Seizes her.)

Mine, mine, I say. Soft tones, avaunt!

Harsh words and deeds alone — come —

Come ——— *(Forcing her.)*

Leon. Mercy! mercy! From thee
I ask it not, but from the Gods
Implore it. Unloose me, ruffian,
Or with my hands I'll tear my flesh —
(Shouts without — the Gauls — the Gauls. LEONIDA falls on her knees.)

My prayer is heard.

*(CARMITUS stands transfixed for a moment. —
Enter CESTUS.)*

Ces. The Gauls in thousands swarm
Upon our front and rear.

Car. Slave! then fight 'em; nor
Statue-like stand thus with fear.

Dash on ———

(The clashing of arms and shouts without.)
On, Romans, on!

(Exit CARMITUS and CESTUS.)

(*The alarm continues. LEONIDA gazes eagerly.*)

Leon. The battle rages fierce on every side,
And towards the hill they move.

The Gods be with thee, Gauls. Deep,

Deep, revenge your wrongs. Ha!

What form is that now this way

Madly rushing? It is—it is ——

(*Enter GAULANTUS and Gauls.*)

Gaul. (*Speaking as he enters.*) Burn their
tents:

On, on: Vengeance is the cry!

Leon. It is—it is —— Gaulantus!

Gaul. Leonida!

Leon. Gaulantus!

Gaul. My wife! my wife!

(*LEONIDA, with a shriek of joy, rushes into his
arms.*)

Gaul. And art thou safe? alive! alive!

Ye Gods, my thanks accept. My wife
Is mine again!

Leon. O joy! I hardly dared believe
'Thou lived.

Gaul. Yes, Leonida; still forever thine.
Our brother, too, is left us. We'll
Yet be happy 'mid our native hills.

Leon. I'm mad with joy—with joy alone.
Sorrows too hard for woman-kind I've borne,
O, I could tell thee—but I will not
Cloud with ill-timed woe,

The prospect of our joys.

(Shouts without and trumpets.)

Gaul. I must away, dear love; the
Battle 's at its height.

(Enter ALIBDUS.)

Alib. Number on number of the Romans pour:
Our soldiers fly the field.

Gaul. Secure my wife, and to the mountains
Bear her.

Alib. Thy wife?

Gaul. Away, away; no questions ask.
The Gods protect thee, Leonida — wife.

Leon. O leave me not again, my husband —
Friend! ———

Gaul. Thy life — mine — all — all
Upon a thread doth hang.
Go — go.

Leon. I am content. Farewell!
Angels watch o'er thee, and
Thy life protect.

Gaul. Turn you this way, and take
The swiftest steed. Away, Alibdus,
I will meet thee soon.

(Exeunt ALIBDUS and LEONIDA.)

Gaul. Rage on, ye much wrong'd Gauls, and
At one sweep the brutal foe o'erwhelm.

(He is rushing off, when ARBINIUS confronts him.)

They come to a guard.)

Gaul. Vain boy! dost dare confront me!

Arb. Aye, savage.

(*GAULANTUS disarms him and then kills him.*)

Gaul. Thou hast thy journey ended.

(*Enter CARMITUS, CESTUS, REGANTUS and LAT-
ICUS.*)

Car. Surround him—beat him down.

Gaul. (*Brandishing sword.*) Let host on host
Oppose, I still will bear me on.

Why stand ye, quaking there?

'Thou 'rt two to one, thrice told, and yet

Ye fearful pause.

(*Shouts without.*)

Car. Dastards! have you to statues turn'd,
That thus you idly gaze!

Your general dares to meet—to conquer,
Or to die.

(*Makes a pass at GAULANTUS who knocks the
sword from his hand, and places his foot
upon it.*)

Gaul. Ha, ha, ha; thou art a child.
Roman! the hour of retribution's
Drawing nigh. My every sinew
Swells with more than lion's strength.
One blow would take thy puny life,
But I disdain to strike.

(*Shouts without.*)

Ha! cries of vengeance fill the air;

Fight, Gauls, I'm with thee still.

(*Rushing off, he is opposed by CESTUS and RE-
GANTUS. He cuts them down, and rushes
off.*)

Car. Cowards! miscreants! on — on — pursue.
(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV. — *The outskirts of the Camp.*

The alarm kept up. Enter CARMITUS and MANILUS.

Car. Like savage fiends they fight; our
Soldiers strew the field, and
Every heart turns weak.

Man. What better could'st expect; I've
Warned thee oft, but
What to thee is counsel?

Car. Cease thy complaints; 't is useless as
Ill-timed.

Man. Yes! the foe have ill-timed come.
We had been lower than we are,
Had I not marr'd thy orders.

Car. No more, or I'll ———

Man. Strike! thou would'st say;
Do, if thou wilt; yet will I speak
While I can use my tongue. I
Saved thy life just now — take mine;
'T will be a good return.

Car. No more; upon a sea tempestuous
Am I wreck'd. Trouble on trouble
Comes, and no alleviation.

(*Enter CESTUS.*)

Ces. The Gauls have ta'en possession
Of the hill.

Car. Then drive them off; lead all
The force at once: desert the camp,
And desperate on them rush.

(Exit CESTUS.)

Go, too, good Manilus. O, I am sick at heart!

Man. A sorry time is this for generals
To grow sick.

(Exit.)

Car. On every side harrassed, I
Know not how to turn.

(Shouts. Enter BARANICUS, speaking.)

Bar. Onward, my comrades, on. Ha!

(Seeing CARMITUS.)

Roman, yield! or to the earth be cleft!

Car. Never let noble Roman yield,
To dastard savage Gaul.

(They fight; the din of battle continues; BARANICUS throws him down, and is about striking, when CESTUS, MANILUS, REGANTUS, &c., enter, seize him and beat him to the ground.)

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *The Roman Camp.*

Soldiers discovered with banners, &c. Flourish.

Enter CARMITUS, MANILUS, REGANTUS, LATICUS, and soldiers.

Car. Have the dead been all enearthed good Manilus?

Man. They have.

Car. We have a victory, though a bloody one: The Gods be praised they are at Last suppressed.

Man. No, in that thou 'rt wrong; they Are not yet subdued. More Fighting yet we 'll have ere That takes place.

Car. A skirmish then at most; An hundred men could scarce be found To marshal on the plain.

Man. An hundred six times told, And then the count is underrated.

Car. Regantus, take a thousand men, And search ten leagues around; Spare none, but all destroy Who willing prisoners will not become.

Reg. I shall obey.

(Exit.)

Car. Laticus, five hundred horsemen take, And speed around the camp.

(Exit LATICUS.)

Car. Two days or more, upon the brink of death,

I've idly gaping stood.

Man. What! be a soldier, and that not expect?

Car. A sinewy man was he, who
Last I did encounter.

Man. Aye, marry, was he, and would
Have laid thee low, but for our
Timely aid.

Car. Humph! The shackles on his limb
He bore with dignity majestic.
But, Manilus, was the prisoner ta'en
Who bore away my slave?

Man. Aye, and the woman now
Within thy tent awaits.

Car. I'll instant to her, and if my love
She dares resist, I'll force her to my will.

(*Enter CESTUS.*)

Ces. The captived woman, and the
Warrior Gaul, are both from
Thralldom fled.

Car. My curses on you!
For this base neglect.

Ces. Why should they? I
Was not her guard.

Man. Pooh, let her go; in Rome there
May be found women fair as she.

Car. Dastard, idiot, fool!

Man. I may be these; but yet am I
A soldier — not a love-sick girl.

Car. Then die; thou meddling fool,
(*Stabs him.*)

'Thou 'lt wag thy tongue no more.

Man. Thou hast struck home; now
'Triumph, mighty general, and
Boast my death.

Car. I was too rash I do confess.

Man. 'Thou dost at last confess. I know
I well advised thee. I'm of it
Really glad. I've got my furlough;
'Tis all over now. Farewell, Carmitus,
O — O — my advice was — oh, oh, oh ———
(*Dies.*)

Car. What have I done? I'm sick to death.
This act was rash, and will
My name disgrace. Manilus, too,
Was well beloved; though rough, he
Was most honest. I would
I could recall him, but it is
Too late. I must forget it,
And in sleep my troubled thoughts
Compose.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE II. — *A Wood.*

Enter BARANICUS, wounded, with LEONIDA.

Bar. We are safe, my sister, from
Their power safe.

Leon. Oh, Baranicus! thy wounds I fear
Do give thee pain to move.

Bar. No, no; think not of that; thou 'rt free,
And they that tear thee from me now,
Must more than mortal be.

Leon. Where can my husband be?

Bar. Doubtless in fight. His eager soul
No power can overcome.

Leon. And are we quite o'erpowered —
Completely beaten; and is our
Race extinct?

Bar. But few do live to tell the
Awful fate their comrades met.

Leon. O days of anguish and of woe!

Bar. They fell not unrevenged; in
Mangled heaps the Romans lie,
All o'er the crimsoned plain.
I 'm human, but my heart
Did gladden to see them gasp
In death. O that pang! ———

Leon. Brother, thy cheek is pale;
Thine eyes look dizzy.

Bar. I feel I 'm going, let us on;
The torch of life expires within.
My brother! O, once again
Let me behold him. Sister,
Fear not, I am able even yet
To bear thee safe, and to his
Arms consign thee.

Leon. Lean on me.

Bar. 'Thou art a woman, and should
Need my aid.

(*Excunt.*)

SCENE III. — *Cave and rocks as before.*

GAULANTUS discovered lying on the stage exhausted — ALIBDUS kneeling over him.

Alib. Gaulantus, my friend, my general,
Arouse! Alas! he heeds me not.
Despair has quite unnerved his heart,
Fatigue his body wearied.
Fiercely he fought, and madly rush'd
Where danger was most great.
When all had fled, he stood alone
Stemming the battle's torrent.
But those gallant limbs that
Stoutly buoyed him up in battle contest
Have failed him, for he mourns his
Captured wife. Ha! he revives.
Gaulantus, friend, awake and
Rouse thee man!

Gaul. Cowards! dare not fly!
The thunder of my wrath shall
On you fall with tenfold vengeance.
Look there — within his villain arms
The tyrant clasps my wife; her
Face with gore is smeared, and

With black horror stands she there
Convulsed. Unloose these chains,
And let me grasp my falchion;
With Herculean strength I'll fell
The tyrant dead.

(Springs upon his feet.)

The air is dark with smoke,—Baranicus,
On, on; bring up the horsemen, and
Alibdu thou, the bowmen straight
Lead on.——Surround—cut off—
Spare none, but strike—ha—ha—ha.

(Falls into the arms of ALIBDUS.)

Alib. Gaulantus, be composed; the
Battle's past.

Gaul. And we were beat. The
Very Gods did fight for Rome.

Alib. From thy pale cheek the color flies.

Gaul. Dark was the morning of this day,
How will it end? In something
More than night. There should be
Yawning earthquakes to engulf
Creation, for men have lost their
Natures, and like beasts,
Each other do denounce.
And he whose hand's with blood
The deepest dyed, is in the
General eye the first and greatest;
The bellowing rabble call him brave,
And to him bend the knee..

Most fulsome degradation! The
Just man scorns, and views with pity.
I've drank of blood until
My shuddering heart doth sink within me.
My race is almost run,—I've
Lived enough, and in the conflict
Would have died, but for my wife,
Whom I so long to meet. I almost
'Thought she waited my approach.

Alib. Scarce had we come a league
When twenty horsemen on us rushed
And bore her from my care.

Gaul. What! did not destroy her life?

Alib. Nay, they harmed her not, but
Bore her hence alive.

Gaul. Alive, and in their power!
Avenging Gods, give me your lightning's
Speed. How many leagues from here
Doth lie the Roman camp?

Alib. But few; yon hill alone
Divides us.

Gaul. Farewell, Alibdus!

Alib. Where wouldst thou go?

Gaul. To the camp, to die
With Leonida! (*Looking off.*)

Ha! what's that? look there —
My eyes sure cannot mock me!
Now, nearer — look, Alibdus,
See'st thou not my wife?

Alib. Aye, and thy brother.

Gaul. My brother, bleeds he not?

(*BARANICUS enters, bearing LEONIDA; he gives her to GAULANTUS and falls.*)

Leon. My husband! my Gaulantus!

Bar. Brother! receive thy wife — I — I —

Am — am — free as I lived — I —

Die.

(*Dies.*)

Gaul. He's gone! A nobler Gaul
Ne'er trod the earth.

Look, Leonida, how he
Smiles in death.

Leon. His spirit seemed to whisper, 'follow me.'
The journey's short, but O, terrific!
The bravest cannot look on death
Without a secret dread. And I —
The Romans are in hot pursuit
Beyond the distant hill. Let's haste,
Or in their hated power we'll fall.

Gaul. Laugh at their power! thy
Husband's with thee now. Alibdus,
Look from yonder summit, and
Speak of what thou se'est.

(*Exit ALIBDUS.*)

I ne'er saw death so placid. Thou
Wert a kind, good brother, and a
Valued friend! Farewell! —
Come, Leonida, I'll lead thee
To the spot where rests

Our little boy. 'Tis but a step,
Come, come.

Leon. My child! my heart doth bleed.

Gaul. Weep not, but come. With
Mine own hands his little grave
I dug; kissed his cold cheek,
And gave him to the Gods.

Leon. Lead on—lead on; my child—
Ye Gods look pity.

Gaul. Come then: brother, I'll
Come to thee again!

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV.—*A Wood. Flourish.*

Enter CARMITUS and LATICUS with soldiers.

Car. Laticus, hast thou cohorts
In each direction sent?

Lat. I have.

Car. The woman and the Gaul,
Have they yet been o'erta'en?

Lat. No!

Car. Why did I spare her recreant life?
But she shall yet be mine.
Still does thy death, O! Manilus,
Haunt my soul. With maddening
Thoughts my brain is racked,
My heart throbs high, and ill's
On every side foreboding.

(*Enter REGANTUS.*)

Reg. We have another Gaul secured.

Car. Let him this instant die.

Reg. He felled two soldiers to the earth,
Ere we could get his sword.

Car. Is he so bold? I'll look at him.
Bring forth four horses, and
His heathen limbs disjoint. Come on.

(*Flourish.—Exeunt.*)

SCENE V.—*A mountainous country. GAULANTUS and LEONIDA discovered on the rocks. They stand looking for some time; GAULANTUS exclaims:*

Gaul. He has sunk from my sight; farewell,
A long farewell, my brother and my friend.

(*Comes down.*)

Our labors we have finished here
On earth, and now for worlds unknown;
These tenements of clay, we cannot
With us bear, but needs must leave
Them here. Why art so pale?
Does death not bring thee joy? Come,
Cheer thee, love, and smile as thou
Wert wont.

(*She falls on his neck.*)

The hills around with million foes are crowded;
Encircled 's the lone rock on which we stand.
The wild and angry billows near us,

And o'er our heads devoted, storm-clouds
Hang. Thou fearest not death?

Leon. Alas! the means 's more dreadful
Than the death. To die by mine
Own hand would anger heaven.

Gaul. The Gods are just. 'Tis glory
By our own hands to die. Our
Fathers' boast; they ne'er would yield
And live. What would'st thou live for?
There is nothing now. The myriads
Of stars that spangle yonder heaven,
Thou oft hast seen before. The
Queen of night, whose radiant beam
The earth illumines, is now
Just as it ever was. The
Lightning's flash would only dim
Thy sight; the rolling thunder cloud
Thine ear appal. Then bid
Them all farewell.—the spacious globe,
The mighty hills, the wide-spread lakes,
The garnished fields and the
Gentle gliding streams! They
All are dear, loved, beautiful!
All hard to leave; because
They 're to our nature suited;
Yet in that other world—the
World the Gods inhabit—(our
Nature changing,) these all
Will prove but dross. Then

Let us haste our journey to begin. (Pause.)
Would'st thou prefer to die
By Roman hands?

Leon. O! no, no, no; from thine,
My husband, thine!

Gaul. I could not kill thee, mine
Hand would tremble; take
Thou the sword.

Leon. Indeed I cannot; my blood
Doth chill when I but
Think of it.

Gaul. Thou dost remember our early days,
Those happy days, when at our board
Our smiling kinsmen met; when
Peace and plenty were our
Mansion's guests; and when
Our little boy our hearts made glad.

Leon. Happy, thrice happy days!
'The summit of terrestrial joys
We trod, but now
The Gods have cursed——

Gaul. Forbear! 't is not for clay like us
To question heaven! Before us
Gathers fast a deep'ning gloom,—
Our sole remaining hope is death—
Kind death—that sweet sleep which
Wakes no more! The cloud
Each moment thickens; no anchor
'Gainst this storm of earth-born ills

Can hold. Here is our friend; (*Draws sword.*)
Welcome it to thy heart. Dost
Understand me, love? Start not,
These arms will bear thee up,
Until thy angel spirit takes its flight!

Leon. My heart! Give me the steel!—

Gaul. One last embrace, my love, my joy,
My wife. (*Embraces her.*)

Leon. (*Drops the sword.*) I do not
Need the sword. I feel death's
Thrilling fangs upon me now;
With arms together clasped, let's
To the studded sky ascend.
There feuds we'll know no more,
But bliss forever feel. My mother
And my child both wave me on;—
Sweet zephyrs round me play,
And heaven-born anthems greet
Mine ear! I come—I come—I—
(*A trumpet sounds at a distance; they stand
awed a moment.*)

Gaul. The blood-thirst wolves approach;
We must be brief. (*Picks up sword.*)

Leon. Hold thou the sword, and I
Will on it rush.

Gaul. I will, I will—one last embrace.
(*Kisses her.*)

Leon. Now, now, my husband.
(*GAULANTUS holds out his sword, his head half
turned.*)

Leon. I tremble—Gods!—I cannot!

Gaul. They come; look there;

Death or slavery!

(A trumpet without, she rushes on the sword; shrieks, and falls.)

Glorious! bravely! nobly done!

The Gods applaud the deed!

Ha, ha, ha; safe be thy journey,

Sweetest love!

Leon. I feel no pain; death steals upon me
Like a slumbering dream. All, all

Is past—adieu, adieu. *(Dies.)*

Gaul. Cold, breathless, dead! happy Leonida!

The Gods thy spirit's guardian be.

And now, ye Roman dogs, come on,

Ye hungry vultures, come. Your

Numbers awe not, and your

Power's disdained.

(Trumpet.)

Come on I'll greet you with a curse.

(Enter CARMITUS, REGANTUS, LATICUS and Soldiers.)

Car. What art thou?

Gaul. A Gaul! thou feeble shadow of

A man! The fairest of my race

Died on this sword, which soon

Thy doom will seal. See

Where she lies in tranquil sleep!

Car. It is the same—the self-same
Slave that——

Gaul. Liar accursed! she's free!

(Pointing to heaven.)

Car. Insolent wretch! Upon him,
Soldiers!

*(GAULANTUS rushes at the soldiers, who at first
fall back.)*

Kill him!

*(They all spring upon him and disarm him; he
then rushes at CARMITUS, who is on the
extreme left, and seizes him by the throat;
CARMITUS stabs him; they fall together.
GAULANTUS still grasping him.)*

Reg. Unloose thy hold!

Gaul. Never!—never!

*(REGANTUS and LATICUS both stab him, endeavor-
ing to make him free CARMITUS. GAU-
LANTUS chokes him.)*

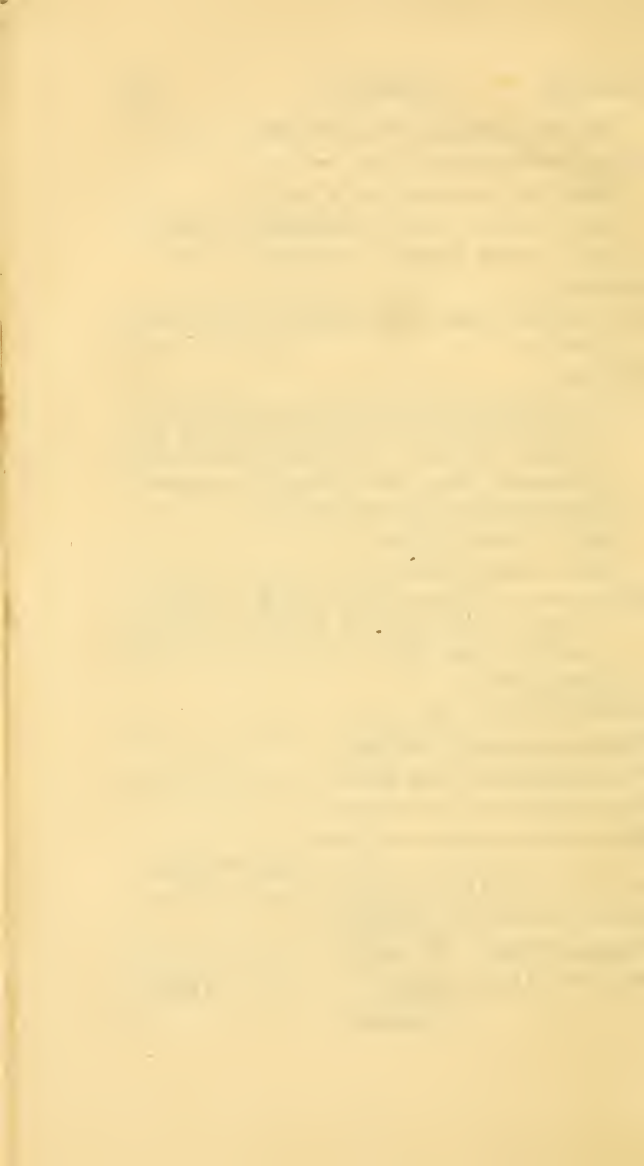
I am the victor! aye,
Revenged in full. See how
He gasps in death! Behold
Your general—see him writhe,
He struggles—ha! he'd live—
But no, no—he sinks—he dies!

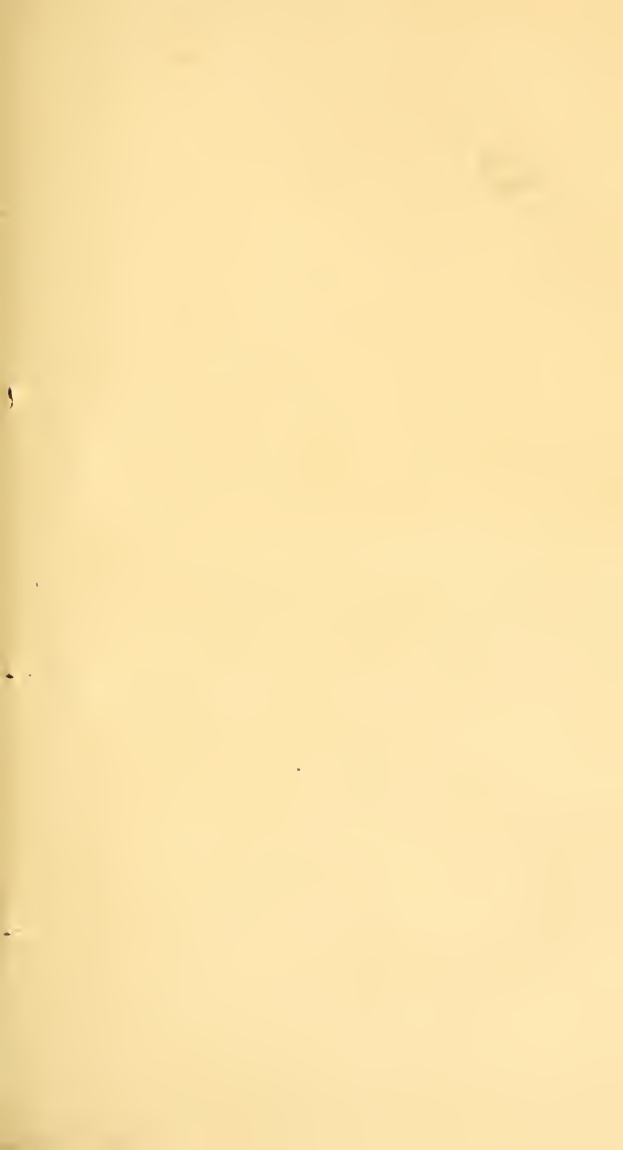
(CARMITUS dies.)

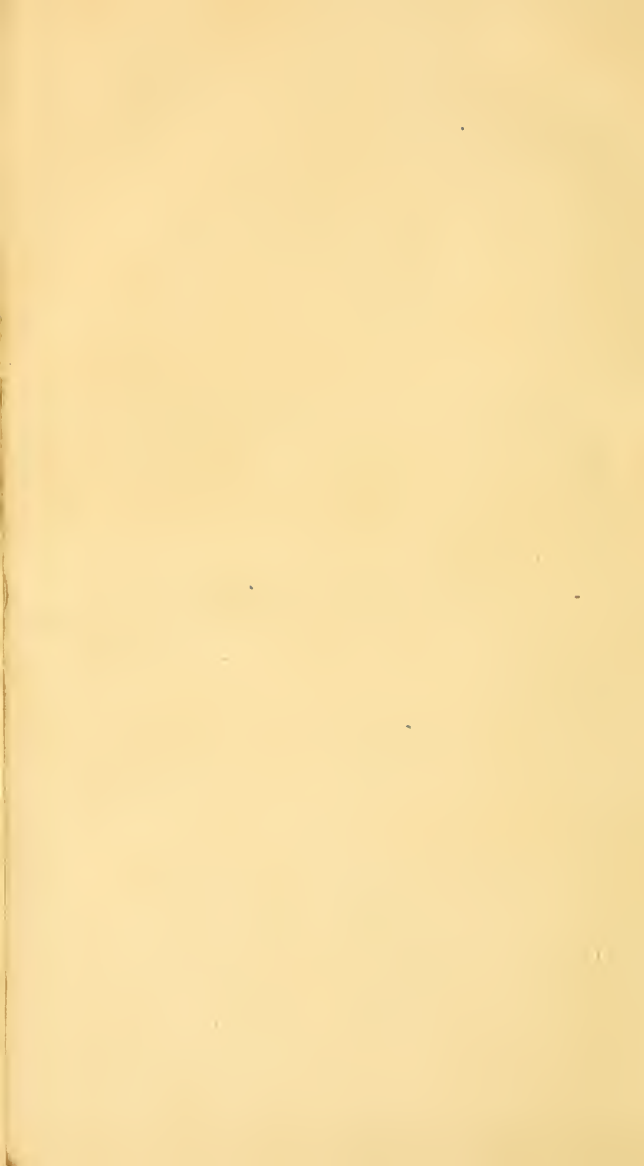
I—I—am going too! Death—
Death, conquers me—but I—I
Conquered thee! My wife—
My wife—I follow thee!

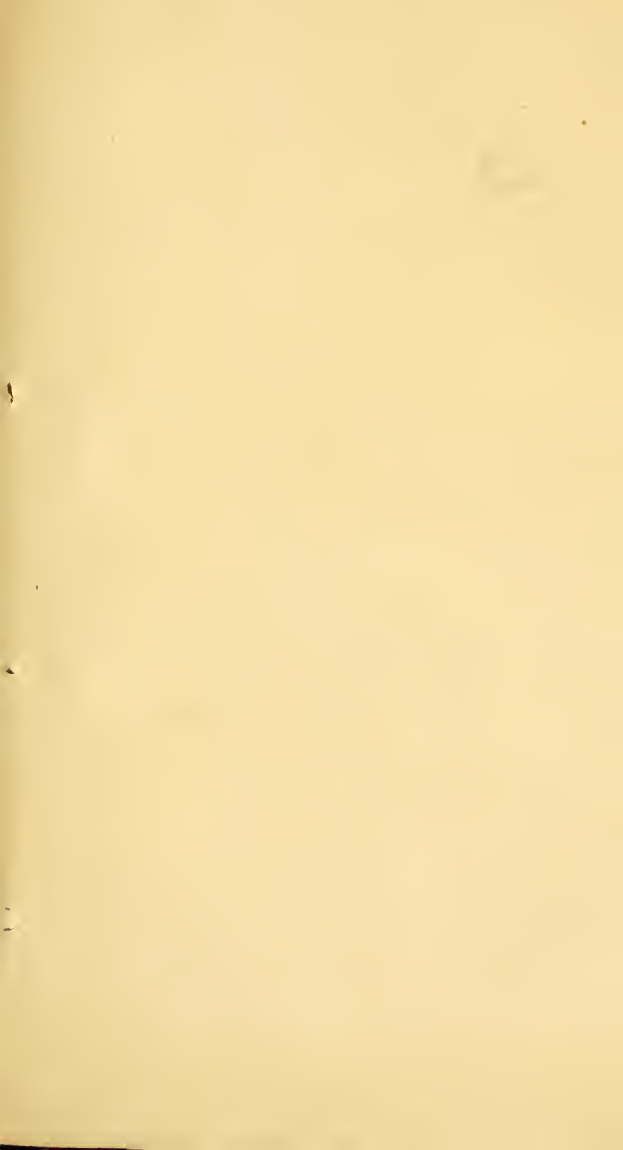
(Dies.)

THE END.













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